

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 H-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 INR-10 L-03

PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 /066 W

-----020415 291040Z /16

O 291020Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8663

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SHUM, BG, US

SUBJ: CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN CHITTAGONG HILL TRIBESMEN

REF: A) STATE 079921; B) 77 DACCA 6637

1. FOR DECADES, THERE HAS BEEN ETHNIC TENSION BETWEEN THE VARIOUS TRIBAL GROUPS OF THE HILL TRACTS AND THE PLAINS-DWELLING BENGALIS. THE LATTER ARE MUSLIM AND THE TRIBESMEN ARE GENERALLY BUDDHIST WITH A STRONG ETHNIC RESEMBLANCE TO THE HILL TRIBES OF BURMA. TENSIONS INTENSIFIED IN THE LATE 1960S WHEN THE KAPTAI DAM WAS COMPLETED, CREATING A LAKE WHICH FLOODED THE TRIBAL LANDS USED FOR PINEAPPLE CULTIVATION.

2. THE PRIMARY GROUP GENERATING THE UNREST IS THE CHAKKMA TRIBE, THE LARGEST OF THE DOZEN OR SO TRIBES. SPORADIC CLASHES HAVE OCCURRED DURING THE PAST YEAR BETWEEN THE BANGLADESH ARMY (REF B) AND IN SOME INSTANCES ACTIVISTS OF THE LEFTIST POLITICAL PARTY REPRESENTING THE CHAKKMAS, THE JANATA SANGSTA, OR PEOPLE'S PARTY (SEE DACCA MEMCON OF 14 APRIL 1977). THE PARTY'S PRINCIPAL AIM IS TO AGITATE FOR REGIONAL AUTONOMY, WHICH THE BDG IS UNWILLING TO CONSIDER. REGULAR BANGLADESH ARMY UNITS HAVE BEEN POSTED

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IN THE AREA FOR AT LEAST THE PAST YEAR AND PERIODIC REPORTS ARE HEARD OF RAPE AND LOOTING BY THE SOLDIERS. THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS RECENTLY OF A MAJOR INCREASE IN VIOLENCE.

3. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE ACCORDING TO SOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY AS A WHOLE, IT SEEMS UNFOUNDED TO

SAY THAT THERE HAVE BEEN "SHARP INCREASES" IN INCIDENTS  
OF TORTURE AND DETAINMENT, AS PER REFTEL A. RATHER,  
THERE IS IN THE HILL TRACTS A CONTINUING POLITICAL,  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEM, THE SEVERITY OF WHICH  
REMAINS UNCLEAR.  
SCHNEIDER

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptoning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** US CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS, TRIBALISM  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 29 mar 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Document Number:** 1978DACCA01929  
**Document Source:** CORE  
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**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Reference:** 78 STATE 79921, 77 DACCA 6637  
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**Subject:** CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN CHITTAGONG HILL TRIBESMEN  
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**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
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